

Kent County Public Library Computer Use Policy

Access to Library Computers

The Kent County Public Library has established the following computer use policy to ensure that all Library patrons have the opportunity to use the Library's public access computers in a timely manner.

While visitor's passes which permit computer access without a Library card are available to short term out of town visitors, it is expected that long term visitors and Maryland residents will register for a Library card and maintain their account in good standing for continued access to Library computers.

Library cards are available free of charge to Maryland residents and for a small fee to out of state patrons. Patrons who do not already have a Library card, should bring proof of address to any Library branch and ask at the circulation desk for an application form. Minors will need the signature of a parent or guardian to receive their Library card.

If a patron's Library card is not in good standing, that patron's access to the Library's computers will be automatically blocked until their account is once again in good standing. If they are unable to pay fines and fees required to bring their account into good standing, they should speak with a Library manager about their options for computer use.

Each Library patron is permitted up to 1 hour in a given session or up to 2 hours if no one else is waiting for the computer. There is a total limit of 2 hours per person per day. Additional time may be permitted at staff discretion if the computers are not being heavily used at the time of the request.

Exceptions to this policy and accommodations for extenuating circumstances may be made on a case by case basis at the discretion of Library management.

Internet Usage

To fulfill its mission of providing public access to information of all types in a wide range of formats, The Kent County Public Library provides access to Internet resources. The Internet offers access to many valuable local, national and international sources of information. However, some information found on the Internet may be inaccurate, incomplete, dated, or offensive to some individuals. A good information consumer must evaluate the validity and appropriateness of information found.

Choosing and Evaluating Sources

The Internet is a series of communication linkages leading to a highly diverse array of information content. Library patrons use it at their own risk. In choosing sources to link to from its home pages, the Library follows its materials selection guidelines. Beyond this, the Library is not responsible for the content of the Internet, changes in content of the sources to which the Library home pages link, or for the content of sources accessed through secondary links. In an effort to assist its users, the Library has created web sites for the general population, for teens and for children to help guide them to sources that are accurate, complete and current and that provide them with a wealth of information on the local, national and global level.

Access by Minors

Parents or legal guardians must assume responsibility for deciding which Library resources are appropriate for their own children. Parents or legal guardians should guide their children in use of the Internet and inform them about materials they should not use. While the Library affirms and acknowledges the rights and

responsibilities of parents and guardians to monitor and determine their children's access to Library materials and resources, including those available through the Internet, the Library has taken certain measures designed to assist in the safe and effective use of these resources by all minors.

A. To address the issue of access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet, including material that is harmful to minors, the Library:

1. Develops and maintains special web sites for children and teens;
2. Encourages staff to guide minors away from materials that may be inappropriate; and,
3. Distribute a publication entitled *Child Safety on the Information Highway*.
4. Filters or Blocks Internet Sites that are obscene, contain child pornography, or that harmful to minors. Filters may be turned off for adults by a Librarian to enable access for bona fide research and other lawful purposes.

B. To address the issue of the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications, as well as the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors, the Library urges minors to keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

1. Never give out identifying information such as home address, school name, or telephone number.
2. Let parents or guardians decide whether personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information should be revealed.
3. Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone via the computer without parents' or guardians' approval.
4. Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, threatening, or make one uncomfortable.
5. Have parents or guardians report an incident to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 if one becomes aware of the transmission of child pornography.
6. Remember that people online may not be who they say they are.
7. Remember that everything one reads may not be true.
8. Patrons are not permitted to use instant communication software.

Rules Governing Use

Due to the limited resources available for provision of public access to the Internet, the Library may set limits, for example, on use of large files of still or moving images or sound, or on downloading files in any medium. The Library also reserves the right to change the amount of time an individual user can use the Library's computers. The public must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, including laws governing the transmission and dissemination of information while accessing the Internet.

Users may not:

- Use the network to make unauthorized entry into other computational, informational or communication services or resources.
- Distribute unsolicited advertising.
- Invade the privacy of others by failing to use computers appropriately and responsibly.
- Make any attempt to damage computer equipment or software.
- Engage in any activity that is harassing or defamatory
- Use the Internet for any illegal activity, including hacking, copyright infringement, or any other activity that violates the rights of third parties or is inconsistent with the Library's tax-exempt status or its proper operation.

- Any action that improperly restricts or inhibits patrons from enjoying and using the Internet and other library resources is strictly prohibited. Exposure of other individuals, particularly minors, to materials or images which may be unsuitable or objectionable, such as abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, racially offensive, or illegal materials may result in the loss of computer privileges.

Violations may result in loss of access. Unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Public Users' Security

Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information regarding users' activities. However, the Kent County Public Library will not release information on the use of specific Internet resources by members of the public except as required by law or necessary for the proper operation of the Library.

Compliance

The Library reserves the right to take appropriate action to insure compliance with this policy.

Guidelines on Access to Information

The Kent County Public Library is guided by the following American Library Association statements on access to information:

- The Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statement

In general, the Library is guided by a commitment to access to information policies that provide appropriate protections to its patrons while being consistent with the Library's longstanding commitment to the principles of free expression as set forth in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Policy Subject to Revision

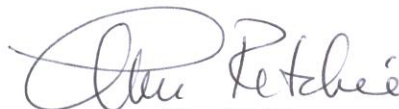
This policy is an update and replacement to the *Internet Policy* originally created on May 18, 2000 and adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on May 24th 2004. This policy may be revised from time to time.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 25, 2011

REVISED

May 21, 2012



Alice Ritchie

President – Board of Trustees
Kent County Public Library